



Leaning into Love: Building Strong Relationship Bonds

Strategies to Build Love and Friendship – In order to get the benefits of a loving relationship, we must be willing to lean in and focus on the act of giving love.

- **Remember Your Love Story** – Each partner writes or remembers out loud the story of the relationship. What attracted you? What was your experience? What did you feel and how did each of you behave?
- **Fondness and Admiration** – Think about, notice, and relate, on a daily basis the positive aspects of your partner when together and apart. This can have a powerful impact on your bond and your ability to weather difficulties.
- **Build the Friendship** – Most relationships don't end due to conflict. They end due to a loss of connection and friendship. On a daily basis, reestablish the friendship. Ask them something about themselves. Be curious.

Communication Strategies

All relationships have conflict. It's how you manage the conflict that matters!

- **Start by assuming something positive.** For example, "I know you work hard at work but the housework is getting overwhelming to me and I could really use your help with it."
- **Pay attention to your tone.** Be polite "Honey can we talk for a minute..."
- **Describe what makes you upset, without judgment.** "I know you didn't intend to, but you forgot to take out the garbage as you promised."
- **Don't use "you always" or "you never."**
- **Be specific about the complaint.** Don't pile up a bunch of complaints. Make the complaint a one-time specific event.



- **Don't just identify the problem. Identify what you want or need.** "I was disappointed that you made plans with friends for the weekend. I would really like to have some time with you alone."
- **Learn to Recognize Flooding.** If you or your partner are so emotionally stressed by the conversation that you can't listen or have a reasonable response, both of you would be better off at that point to take a break until you calm down.

Invest in "The Magic 5 Hours a Week"

Parting: Say goodbye. Find something out about their day ahead

2 minutes a day x 5 workdays = 10 minutes

Reunion: Stress reducing conversation

20 minutes a day x 5 workdays = 1 hr 40 minutes

Admiration and Appreciation: Find a way to communicate genuine admiration or appreciation

5 minutes a day x 7 days = 35 minutes

Affection: Touch, hold, a kiss before bed and let go of small irritations

5 minutes a day x 7 days = 35 minutes

Date night: Relaxing time to connect, talk, and enjoy one another.

2 hours a week

Grand Total = 5 hours a week can keep a partnership on track

This presentation is based on the work of John M. Gottman Ph.D. and Nan Silver. Read further about his powerful strategies for building strong relationship bonds in, *The Seven Principles for Making a Marriage Work*.